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Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the applications:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) A method comprising:
  - extracting overhead data from a frame;
  - sending the extracted overhead data to an external programmable device;
  - modifying the extracted overhead data of the frame in the programmable device;
  - receiving the modified overhead data from the external programmable device; and
  - inserting the modified overhead data into said frame.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said modifying includes modifying at least some bits of the extracted overhead data.
3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising storing payload data of the frame in a data

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structure for an amount of time based upon times to send the extracted overhead data to the external programmable device, modify the overhead data, and receive the modified overhead data from the external programmable device.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3 including performing said extracting, storing, modifying and inserting in a pipelined manner.
5. (Original) The method of claim 3 comprising performing said extracting, sending, modifying, receiving, and inserting for another frame and including modifying extracted overhead data of the one frame according to a network state different from a network state used to modify the extracted overhead data of the other frame.
6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 3 wherein the amount of time payload data of the frame is stored in a data structure is approximately equal to a total amount of time spent extracting, modifying and inserting the overhead data.

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7. (Original)    The method of claim 6 including adjusting at least one of the times for extracting, storing, modifying and inserting.

8. (Original)    An apparatus comprising:

    a network processor to process payload data of a frame;  
    a logic circuit coupled to the network processor, the logic circuit configured to:

        extract overhead data from the frame;

        send the extracted overhead data to an external programmable device;

        receive modified overhead data from the external programmable device; and

        insert the modified overhead data into said frame.

9. (Original)    The apparatus of claim 8 further comprising an external programmable device, the external programmable device programmed to:

    receive the extracted overhead data from the logic circuit;

    modify the extracted overhead data; and

    send the modified overhead data to the logic circuit.

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10. (Original)      The apparatus of claim 8 wherein the  
programmable device comprises a field-programmable gate array.

11. (Previously Presented)      The apparatus of claim 8 including  
a data structure in the logic circuit, wherein the logic  
circuit is further configured to store payload data of the  
frame in the data structure for an amount of time based upon  
times to send the extracted overhead data to the external  
programmable device, modify the overhead data, and receive the  
modified overhead data from the external programmable device.

12. (Previously Presented)      The apparatus of claim 8 wherein  
the logic circuit is further configured to store payload data  
of the frame in a data structure for an amount of time based  
upon times to send the extracted overhead data to the external  
programmable device, modify the overhead data, and receive the  
modified overhead data from the external programmable device.

13. (Original)      The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the data  
structure comprises a first-in, first-out data structure.

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14. (Previously Presented)      The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the amount of time payload data of the frame is stored in a data structure is approximately equal to a total amount of time spent extracting, modifying and inserting the overhead data.

15. (Original)      The apparatus of claim 14 including adjusting at least one of the times for extracting, storing, modifying and inserting.

16. (Original)      An apparatus comprising:  
    a network processor to process payload data of a frame;  
    a logic circuit coupled to the network processor, the logic circuit configured to:  
        extract overhead data from the frame;  
        send the extracted overhead data to an external programmable device;  
        receive modified overhead data from the external programmable device; and  
        insert the modified overhead data into said frame; and  
    an external programmable device coupled to the logic circuit, the external programmable device programmed to:

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receive the extracted overhead data from the logic circuit;  
modify the extracted overhead data; and  
send the modified overhead data to the logic circuit.

17. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 16 wherein the logic circuit is further configured to store payload data of the frame in a data structure for an amount of time based upon times to send the extracted overhead data to the external programmable device, modify the overhead data, and receive the modified overhead data from the external programmable device.

18. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 17 wherein the amount of time payload data of the frame is stored in a data structure is approximately equal to a total amount of time spent extracting, modifying and inserting the overhead data.

19. (Original) The apparatus of claim 18 including adjusting at least one of the times for extracting, storing, modifying and inserting.

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20. (Original)      An apparatus comprising:

    a network device comprising:

        a network processor, the network processor storing  
        instructions that when applied to the processor cause the  
        processor to:

            extract overhead data from a frame;

            send the extracted overhead data to an external  
        programmable device;

            process payload data of the frame;

            receive modified overhead data from the external  
        programmable device; and

            insert the modified overhead data into said  
        frame; and

        an external programmable device coupled to the network  
        processor, the external programmable device programmed to:

            receive the extracted overhead data from the logic  
        circuit;

            modify the extracted overhead data; and

            send the modified overhead data to the logic circuit.

21. (Previously Presented)      The apparatus of claim 20 wherein  
        the network processor is further configured to store payload

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data of the frame in a data structure for an amount of time based upon times to send the extracted overhead data to the external programmable device, modify the overhead data, and receive the modified overhead data from the external programmable device.

22. (Previously Presented)      The apparatus of claim 21 wherein the amount of time payload data of the frame is stored in a data structure is approximately equal to a total amount of time spent extracting, modifying and inserting the overhead data.

23. (Original)      The apparatus of claim 22 including adjusting at least one of the times for extracting, storing, modifying and inserting.

24. (Original)      A system comprising:  
a source of data frames;  
a destination for the data frames;  
an external programmable device;  
a network device to transfer the data frames from the source to the destination, the network device comprising:



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a network processor to process payload data of a frame;

a logic circuit coupled to the network processor, the logic circuit configured to:

extract overhead data from the frame;

send the extracted overhead data to an external programmable device;

receive modified overhead data from the external programmable device; and

insert the modified overhead data into said frame; and

an external programmable device coupled to the logic circuit, the external programmable device programmed to:

receive the extracted overhead data from the logic circuit;

modify the extracted overhead data; and

send the modified overhead data to the logic circuit.

25. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 24 wherein the logic circuit is further configured to store payload data of the frame in a data structure for an amount of time based upon times to send the extracted overhead data to the external

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programmable device, modify the overhead data, and receive the modified overhead data from the external programmable device.

26. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 24 wherein the amount of time payload data of the frame is stored in a data structure is approximately equal to a total amount of time spent extracting, modifying and inserting the overhead data.

27. (Original)      The system of claim 26 including adjusting at least one of the times for extracting, storing, modifying and inserting.

28. (Original)      An article comprising a computer-readable medium including computer-readable instructions that, when applied to a computer system, cause the computer system to:

- extract overhead data from a frame;
- send the extracted overhead data to an external programmable device; and

in response to receiving modified overhead data from the external programmable device, insert the modified overhead data into said frame.

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29. (Previously Presented)      The article of claim 28 further storing instructions that, when applied to a computer system, cause the computer system to:

store payload data of the frame in a data structure for an amount of time based upon times to send the extracted overhead data to the external programmable device, modify the overhead data in an external programmable device, and receive the modified overhead data from the external programmable device.

30. (Previously Presented)      The article of claim 28 including adjusting at least one of the times for extracting, storing, modifying and inserting wherein the amount of time the payload data of the frame is stored in a data structure is approximately equal to a total amount of time spent extracting, modifying and inserting the overhead data.

31. (Previously Presented)      A method comprising:  
extracting overhead data from a frame;  
sending the extracted overhead data to be modified;  
receiving the modified overhead data; and  
inserting the modified overhead data into said frame.

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32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31 wherein at least some bits of the extracted overhead data are modified.
33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31 further comprising storing payload data of the frame in a data structure for an amount of time based upon times to send the extracted overhead data to be modified and receive the modified overhead data.
34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33 including performing said extracting, storing, and inserting in a pipelined manner.
35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33 comprising performing said extracting, sending, receiving, and inserting for another frame and including receiving the modified extracted overhead data of the one frame according to a network state different from a network state used to receive the modified extracted overhead data of the other frame.
36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33 wherein the amount of time payload data of the frame is stored in a data

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structure is approximately equal to a total amount of time spent extracting the unmodified overhead data and inserting the modified overhead data.

37. (Previously Presented)      The method of claim 36 including adjusting at least one of the times for extracting the overhead data to be modified, storing the payload data, and inserting modified overhead data.